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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 000218

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: LABOR UNIONS REJECT NEW PRIME MINISTER

REF: CONAKRY 0209

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (U) Guinea's trade unions issued two separate declarations on May 22 criticizing President Conte's decision to appoint Dr. Ahmed Tidiane Souare as the country's new prime minister (reftel). The Unions-Intersyndicale, which is an umbrella organization representing four independent trade unions, and the Education-Intersyndicale, which represents two independent unions, signed the declarations. Both organizations reject Dr. Souare's nomination, claiming that it represents a violation of the 2007 tripartite agreement.

¶2. (U) According to the Unions-Intersyndicale, the 2007 requirement "obligates the president to nominate a prime minister of competence and integrity, and who has not taken part in or been implicated in any embezzlement schemes." The Education-Intersyndicale stated that the replacing the prime minister of consensus by a member of a previous government that has already been rejected represents a "flagrant provocation aimed at the proponents of change." They further identified Dr. Souare as one of the individuals responsible for Guinea's economic, social, and political woes.

¶3. (U) Both union organizations stated that they do not accept the appointment. Neither groups specifically mentioned plans for a labor strike to protest the decision. However, both union groups noted that they "reserve the right...to use all legal means at their disposition."

¶4. (C) Over the telephone Unions-Intersyndicale leader, Rabiataou Serah Diallo, told Pol LES that the unions are waiting to gauge the government's reaction to the declaration before discussing the next step to be taken. Embassy was not able to get ahold of Rabiataou's co-chair, Dr. Ibrahima Fofana.

COMMENT

¶5. (C) Rabiataou initially told Embassy staff that she had no objection to Souare as prime minister and that the unions would wait to see how the new PM structures his government before reacting (reftel). Fofana, who tends to prefer more a more aggressive approach, was apparently traveling up country when the announcement detailing the new PM's appointment was made. The unions only issued the declarations after Fofana returned to Conakry, suggesting that he was probably pushing for a stronger reaction.

¶6. (SBU) Union leaders may simply want to put out a marker in order to demonstrate that they are watching and expecting to participate in the process of appointing a new government. They did not make an outright threat to strike, which leaves them a little room to maneuver, but not much. The unions have been losing support in recent months and it is unlikely

they can mobilize the kind of support necessary to implement an effective strike of the same magnitude as that of early ¶2007. However, if Souare appoints a controversial cabinet, that may be just the push the population needs to once again back the unions. END COMMENT.

CARTER